

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 29, line 1, with the following amended paragraph:

Alternatively, in another embodiment, portal 140 may maintain a record including ~~“network” distances~~ “network distances” between the service providers it supervises and other computing devices on the network, wherein these distances are a function of network latency and/or number of network “hops” between computing devices on the network. This record of distances may be updated over time based on poll-based or push-based gathering of network status information, and new record elements may be added when service requests are received that involve clients devices or content sources that were previously unknown to the service location manager. When a new service request is received from client device 150, portal 140 can select, according to its record, the service location manager (e.g., 120) that is “nearest” to itself, to client device 150, and/or to the content source required by the service, to handle the service request. However, if the nearest service location manager is subsequently determined to be non-responsive to communication from portal 140, then portal 140 can try to communicate with the next nearest service location manager (e.g., 122) of the record and so forth.